

AMENDED CLAIMS

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original claims 1 - 19 replaced by new claims 1 - 19;
(3 pages)]

+ Statement

WE CLAIM:

1. A retractable mooring line device, comprising

a housing comprising side plates

a rotatable reel comprising sidewalls affixed in spaced relation to a hub, rotatably mounted to the side plates of the housing so that the reel is capable of rotating in two directions, the sidewalls each having a series of notches about its periphery, and

a locking mechanism comprising a latching member comprising a latch positioned and configured to move between an unlocked position in which the latch disengages from the reel and a locked position in which the latch engages at least one of the series of notches about the periphery of each of the side walls of the reel to prevent rotation of the reel in both of the two directions,

whereby when the latch is engaged to the notches the reel is prevented from rotation in both of the two directions, and when the latch is disengaged from the notches the reel is capable of rotation in both of the two directions.
2. The device of claim 1 wherein the housing comprises a gunnel plate affixed to a top edge of each side plate and the latching member comprises a spring bearing against the gunnel plate and urging the latch toward the locked position.
3. The device of claim 1 wherein the latching member comprises an actuating plate exposed to an exterior of the housing.
4. The device of claim 3 wherein the actuating plate and the latch are disposed on opposite sides of a hub, and the hub of the latching member is pivotally secured to the housing adjacent to the reel.
5. The device of claim 3 wherein the latching member is biased to the locked position by a spring bearing against the housing.
6. The device of claim 5 wherein the spring bears against a removable gunnel plate.

7. The device of claim 1 wherein the latching member comprises a latch plate having notches spaced apart a distance corresponding to a spacing between the sidewalls and large enough to allow the sidewalls to pass freely therethrough.
8. The device of claim 7 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through the housing adjacent to the reel and exposed to an exterior of the housing for actuation.
9. The device of claim 8 wherein the latching member is biased to the locked position by a spring bearing against the housing.
10. The device of claim 9 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through a gunnel plate and the spring bears against a bottom plate of the housing.
11. The device of claim 1 wherein the reel comprises a hub mounted over a bushing comprising a self-lubricating plastic, which is rotatably mounted to a pin projecting from the housing.
12. The device of claim 11 wherein the reel is spring loaded for automatic retraction when the locking mechanism is released.
13. The device of claim 12 wherein a spring has a first anchoring end engaging the pin and a second anchoring end engaging the hub.
14. The device of claim 13 wherein the spring is contained within a casing which contains the spring against dislodgement when the reel is removed from the housing.
15. The device of claim 11 wherein the pin is rotationally fixed relative to the housing and the reel rotates around the pin.
16. A retractable mooring line device, comprising

a housing comprising side plates and a gunnel plate affixed to a top edge of each side plate,

a rotatable reel comprising sidewalls affixed in spaced relation to a hub, rotatably mounted to the side plates of the housing so that the reel is capable of rotating in two directions, the sidewalls each having a series of notches about its periphery, and

a locking mechanism comprising a latching member comprising an actuating plate exposed to an exterior of the housing and a latch disposed on opposed sides of the hub, the latch being positioned and configured to move between an unlocked position in which the latch disengages from the reel and a locked position in which the latch engages at least one of the series of notches about the periphery of each of the side walls of the reel to prevent rotation of the reel in both of the two directions, the latching member comprising a spring bearing against the gunnel plate and urging the latch toward the locked position,

whereby when the latch is engaged to the notches the reel is prevented from rotation in both of the two directions, and when the latch is disengaged from the notches the reel is capable of rotation in both of the two directions.

17. The device of claim 16 wherein the latching member comprises a latch plate having notches spaced apart a distance corresponding to a spacing between the sidewalls and large enough to allow the sidewalls to pass freely therethrough.

18. The device of claim 17 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through the housing adjacent to the reel and exposed to an exterior of the housing for actuation.

19. The device of claim 18 wherein the latch plate is slidably disposed through a gunnel plate and the spring bears against a bottom plate of the housing.